



4th Infantry Division (Mechanized)
Office of the Commanding General
Tikrit, Iraq, APO AE 09323-2628

20 January 2004

Office of the Commanding General

To the Ironhorse Family

Your husbands and wives are tentatively scheduled to redeploy from Iraq in March-April 2004. This redeployment will be the culmination of over 18 months of an incredibly high operational tempo for the soldiers and families of this great Division. You and your spouses have been through an extraordinary experience that few will ever understand. With that in mind I have asked the FORSCOM Commander and the Department of the Army to augment Fort Hood and Fort Carson with professional counseling services in addition to the already established redeployment programs. Initially soldiers redeploying from OIF I will be authorized up to a 96 hour pass before beginning the reintegration process. This reintegration process is outlined below and should require about 4 weeks to complete Phase I and II. Upon completion of this process soldiers will be authorized to take up to 30 days block leave. Although Brigade Combat Team will conduct block leave, the entire Division should be on block leave by the May 17, 2004.

The Nation has asked much from the soldiers and families of the 4th Infantry Division and we now have a unique opportunity to establish a model reintegration program for the soldiers returning to their loved ones. This program will leverage current programs and draw on professional counselors and educators to provide seminars to ensure beneficial reintegration to all families of the 4th Infantry Division. I envision this model program to be conducted in three distinct, yet supporting stages. The first stage is the initial reintegration. This consists of medical/dental and support briefings to allow the soldiers to deal with the first few weeks of returning home. The second stage is the core of the program. It consists of seminars aimed at specific target audiences, which allow families and soldiers to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges they will face. The last stage is an ongoing process and provides long-term assistance for soldiers and families. This program would be a test case for the Army. It would allow the Army to collect the data necessary to truly identify the needs of soldiers and families separated for a year under the stresses of combat.

The Fort Hood and Fort Carson soldier and family support structures are fundamental to the overall concept of initial stage of reintegration. They will afford us the opportunity to conduct the mandatory classes as outlined in FORSCOM and III CORPS orders. These include: safety classes, healthcare, entitlements, and general information on the normalization of soldiers after deployments. These classes will establish a foothold from which we can gain the momentum required to move into the next and most critical phase of reintegration.

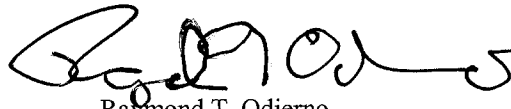
The soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division will be redeploying from an environment unlike any the U.S. Army has faced in many years. The uniqueness of this experience presents us with complex challenges in reintegration. Unlike recent deployments, the protracted combat operations have probably taken a toll on both soldiers and spouses mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Therefore, the second stage of our reintegration program is where these challenges are met and overcome. Through use of seminars led by professional counselors, combat veterans, and educators from various institutes, soldiers and families will come to grips with the changes in their lives. This program will not only target the soldier but also the spouse and all family members. I intend to employ these professionals to provide insight and useful tools for our families and soldiers dealing with post deployment stresses. The concept involves conducting seminars tailored to the unique needs of each soldier and/or family. The seminars would be conducted using both on-post and off-post facilities.

This seminar format would involve soldiers and families attending mandatory seminars organized by demographics to include: married, single, children (by ages), experiences in Iraq, and military leadership by position/rank. The seminars would take place over a period of up to three months. Seminars, workshops, and classes are in small groups, up to no more than 30 personnel. In addition to the mandatory classes, there will be an opportunity to receive assistance through additional seminars and/or one-on-one counseling. The end state is soldiers and families with the ability to recognize, communicate, and overcome the stresses in their lives.

The last stage of reintegration involves the long-term care for the families and soldiers. The lead for this support would be the garrison organization. Although the Fort Hood and Fort Carson garrisons are capable of handling most issues, I envision a program that would involve the sustained use of professional counselors and experts to provide continual support.

Our tour of duty in Iraq has demonstrated the professionalism, dedication, and selflessness of the 4th Infantry Division soldiers and families. I intend to "payback" that selflessness with a reintegration program that is truly professional and conducted in a 1st class manner. This nation will never truly understand the debt that is owed to the soldiers and families of this great Division; however, I intend to quickly do the next best thing by conducting a professional program that thoroughly reintegrates all of us back into the normalcy of life at Fort Hood and Fort Carson. God bless all the Ironhorse families and God bless all the soldiers assigned to the 4th Infantry Division.

"Steadfast and Loyal"

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Odierno', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Raymond T. Odierno
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding General